



Department of Justice

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TWO PLEAD GUILTY TO INTERSTATE TRANSPORTATION OF TEEN FOR PROSTITUTION

COLUMBUS – Alan Townsend and Courtney Shine, both of Columbus, pleaded guilty in United States District Court here to one count of transporting an individual in interstate commerce for the purpose of prostitution. The two admitted they took a 14-year old Columbus teen from here to Florida in June 2008 to introduce her to the lifestyle of being a prostitute. The crime is punishable by up to ten years imprisonment.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, and Keith L. Bennett, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), announced the pleas entered before Senior United States District Judge James L. Graham.

Shine, age 27, pleaded guilty yesterday. Townsend, age 30, entered his plea today.

According to a statement of facts filed with their pleas, the couple met the girl in an Internet chat room. After meeting in person, the girl left for Florida with the couple but later became uncomfortable with the thought of engaging in prostitution. The teen borrowed a cell phone from a stranger at the beach and used it to call her mother and Daytona Beach police. Townsend and Shine were arrested in Florida and returned to Columbus.

Judge Graham will set a date for sentencing.

Lockhart commended the cooperative investigation by FBI agents in Ohio and Florida, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Salvador A. Dominguez and Michael Hunter, who prosecuted the case.

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